

to my late deceased Lady, as to my lo-
ber husbände, since her death, by y^e mo-
wyle, learned and apparaunt person-
ges of Chriffendome: but I vndersta-
nd by your good kynsman, that you ha-
d had the coppes of them frō other place

This is then asmuche as you sha-
haue of me at this time, prayinge yo-
to excuse my wylt, my eyes, my memo-
ry, my hande, and my penne, all whiche
in their natures and offices, do feele the
sorrowe and payne of me, their passion-
nate mystris: who it maye please you
may remaine in your fauour and good
grace.

God graunt you to lyue wel, and to
dye well in his Sonne Iesus Christ.
From Conde, in the countrey of Bry-
the last daye of July.

1564.

Your entyer and good friend
to obeye you.
I. D. V.

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ber husbände, since her death, by y^e mo-
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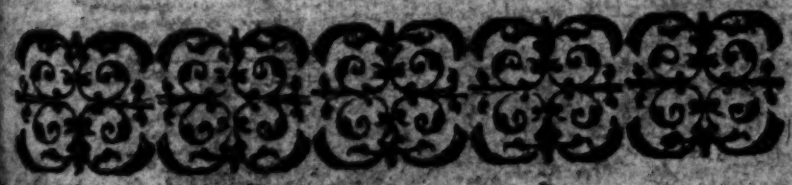
PRACTISES
touching the state of
FRANCE, disco-
uered by an ITA-
LIAN, a gentleman
of FLORENCE.

F

F

JOHN MORRIS.

Printed. 1575.



2 books cost 4s 15 82



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met v
who,
and a
of son



To all Princes, Lordes,
Gentlemen, and all o-
ther good and legitimate
Frenchmen, as wel of the
one as of the other reli-
gion. &c.



In the Moneth of
May this last yere.
1574. traуayling
fro Floreñce towards
Millan, I by chance
met with a Florentine gentleman,
who, after certayne embzasinges
and acquaintance taken by reason
of some former knowledg both
A.iii. at

at the court and at Paris, bled such
 courtesy and honesty towards me,
 that of force I was compelled not
 to leaue his companye, before I
 had visited hys mansion house,
 whereas hauyng for the space of
 two dayes enterteyned mee wth be-
 ry good chære, I hauing pulled on
 my bootes, determining to retorne
 whither as especially my way lay,
 and being ready to take my leaue
 of him, he brought into my cham-
 ber a pourse, conteyning by esti-
 mation (cōsidering the greatnesse
 and weicht of the same) a thou-
 sande or xii. hundred croones, de-
 siring me to take so much thereof
 as my selfe thought good, for the
 which, (notwithstanding I had
 thereof great nēde,) yet determi-
 ning to make of necessitie vertue
 accordyng vnto my duetie I than-
 ked hym, perswading my selfe that

at Millan I shold meet some frend
 who would lend me so much. But
 he hauing shewed me, y^e knowing
 from how long and tedious a iour
 ney I now was returned, he was
 not also ignozant how soze it had
 consumed my coyne, wherefoze he
 earnestly entreated me not to con-
 ceale my necessitie, but willed mee
 in any wise to take my commodi-
 tie of his stoze as him selfe in lyke
 case would doe with mine, where-
 upon doubtyng leaste some of
 my trayne had reuealed vnto
 hym my estate, as in very deede
 the nexte day I learned who had
 committed this offence) I made
 hym answer that seing he would
 needes doe me such a pleasure, I
 would willingly borrow of him two
 hundred crownes, I had scarcely
 sayd the word but presently he told
 me out thzee hundred pistolets bp-

A.iii.

on

on my owne hand which I deliue-
 red vnto him sealed and subscri-
 bed with my owne hande, which
 with great difficoulty I forced him
 to take, and besides that hee vled
 toward me so much verteous and
 honest communication with suche
 thanckes for that I had so much
 pleased him as to come and vi-
 site his house, and so largely ope-
 ned my selfe vnto him, that if the
 opinion of Pithagoras were as cer-
 tayne as in deed it is false, I shuld
 haue occasion to thincke that the
 soule of some Frenchman of the
 former time, reteyning yet the tal-
 of his former Adam, had bene lod-
 ged in the body of this man, euen
 from the day of his birth. Where-
 vpon I am so greatly bound vnto
 him, that I doubt I neuer shal be
 able sufficientlve to discharge my
 selfe, and yet is it but small, in re-
 spect

9
spect of that wherein all French-
men are bound to him generally,
and my selfe perticulerly, in that
after large communication of the
miseries of France, with the waite
in hys eyes, he drew out of a smal
bore two leaues of paper wozitten
in Italian speach and letter, and
deliuered them vnto mee to read,
wherin I satisfying hys expecta-
tion, and being come vnto the last
pde, not geuing me leaue to finish
the same, he desired mee to keepe
and translate it into French, to the
ende I might send the coppes vnto
my frendes, bicause he knew it
most necessary to publishe the con-
tentes therof. Oh how good a man
he was, I would to God that all
Italians which be in France were
like to him, and that they were as
good Christians as I know hym
to be: Wherefore seeing that al-
B.i. though

though the promise which I made
 vnto him, y^e in this his request, I
 would not faile him, touched no o-
 ther but him self only, yet could I
 not be quiet, befoze I had accom-
 plished hys entent, so highly doe I
 finde my selfe bonnde vnto him,
 with much moze reason the ought
 I now to proceed in the same, lea-
 st I should to greenouslye sweaue
 from my duetie toward my coun-
 trey, in as much as indifferently it
 concerneth all frenchmen in gene-
 rall, also bicause the effecte of the
 publishing of the same, may stoppe
 the course of the most cruell and
 tyrannous practises that euer
 were conspired in Chzistendome,
 as all men may perceave in ta-
 king so much peyne as to read my
 translation of the afoze named
 two sheetes of paper. The which
 to the same ende I haue dedicated
 vnto

vnto all my Lordes the princes of
 the blood, other Princes, Lordes
 and gentlemen, and vnto all other
 good and legitimate Frechmen, of
 what estate or condicion soeuer
 they be, as well of the one religi-
 on as of the other, according to the
 counsell of this honest Florentine,
 with most humble supplication vn-
 to all such as I doe owe the same,
 and most earnest request vnto all
 other, that they wil accept the zeale
 and good will as well of the Flo-
 rentine, as of the translator hereof
 with as good a harte, as the trans-
 lator doth pray vnto God long and
 blessedly to preserve thē in health
 and prosperitie, attendyng hys
 owne opinion herevpon, which he
 will place in the ende of the afore-
 sayde discourse.

The preface of the Florentine.



Since Saint Bartle-
mewes day, at what
time the most cruell
and detestable mur-
thers whyche euer
were committed had driven mee
out of France, by reason of the sim-
ple safetie which I perceyued that
honest men should in time to come
enioye in those countreys, I haue
diuers tymes thought vpon a dis-
course, which once I heard geue
in the presence of the Kyng, the
Q. mother, my Lorde the Duke
since K. of Poole, and now King of
France, and the Countie of Rerz, be-
ing at Bloys in the yeare. 1572. a little
before the Q. of Nauarre lately de-
ceased came thether, and it was
made

made by a gentleman, named the
Knight Poncet, whom as I haue
since learned, the Countie of Retz
had sent for into Germany, for that
he had heard him accompted to be
a man of great forecast, iudgemēt,
and discourse, who also had lyued
eight or nine yeares in Turquye,
and now hauyng sundrye tymes
with my selfe weyed the sayde dis-
course, I perceiue that out of the
same might be spronge the origi-
nall of the aforesayd murders, ra-
ther then of any other thing. And
therefore bicause that by diuers
things which since the same dis-
course haue chaced, all men might
more assuredly iudge of the same,
vnlesse my opinion deceiue me,
I thought my selfe bound to put
the same in writing, and to the end
that I might shake of all name of
vnthanckfulnesse, for suche great

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more assuredly iudge of the same,
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I thought my selfe bound to put
the same in writing, and to the end
that I might shake of all name of
vnthanckfulnesse, for suche great

courtesies, fauours, and benefits,
 as in the space of 18. yeares which
 I spent in that countrey, I had re-
 ceiued of the good and myld frech
 nation, to giue the same vnto some
 suche person as might admonishe
 them thereof, to the ende that syn-
 ding my iudgement not to be far
 amisse, they might take hærde vnto
 them selues and looke better to
 their owne affayres, then hetherto
 they haue done, and so to pzeuent
 such pernicious practises as might
 be put in execution agaynst theyr
 persons and estates. The sayde
 Knight Poncet, in his discourse dyd
 fyrst let them vnderstand in howe
 many Countreys, Principallities,
 Kingdomes and Monarchies he
 had bene, then that in anye of the
 same he could neuer fynde any
 perfect obedience vnto the soue-
 rayne, except in Turquy only, and

that the same there proceeded principally of the causes which hereafter shall be expressed.

first the Turke hath no prince or great Lord throughout his Empire but such as him self haue created and made of his owne liberality and proper cost, neyther suffereth he any such to ascend so high, but that he may plucke down and dispatch them at his owne wil and pleasure.

Secondly, he permitteth no other nobilitie to be in estimatiō throughout his empire, but hys Janissaries, who being from their chyldehood by him brought vp and enterprised as his owne creatures, are so bound to his deuotion, that by their meanes and by the auctority of hys ministers and officers, all synde of obedience is presented vnto hym, as well by the meane

B.iii.

man

man as by the welthy person, neither is there any kinde of accompt of præminence, by reason of any antiquitie or greatnesse of houses and families, nor any excuse for any man not to obey him whom the Turcke putteth in office.

Thirddye, he neuer permitteth throughout his owne dominions any other religion then him selfe doth exercise, except in those countreys which he hath lately conquered, whom he will not constrayne to alter theyr profession, because by such meanes he may the more easely enlarge his limittes, and yet there, no man is permitted to dispute of religion. Moreover in all the countreys of his dominions, are no Lordships nor seigniores, for all the landes belong to hym selfe, and those doth he by his officers, ferme out vnto his subiectes

for

for a few yeares, which being expired, the farmers or possessors are dyuen to purchase a newe graunt, and the same to acknowledge from fyue yeares, to fyue yeares, insomuch that no man can say, that that which he possesseth is his owne, and so euery man ende- uoureth more and more to shewe his obedience, to the end that there- by he and hys children may conti- nue in possession in the sayde far- mes, and by this means the great Turke is continually so well sto- red with riches, that vpon no kind of occasiō he euer is forced to rayse taxes or subsidies of his subiectes. Moreover, there be neyther for- tresses, neyther any walled tow- nes in the hart of hys Empire, nor in any other places, but only on the borders and a fewe other, in the which his officers and Cap-
C. i. taynes

pleasures of Kinges, where by the
 sayd Princes and great Lordes
 may rightly be termed controu-
 lers and hinderers of the Kinges
 willes, and this proceedeth of the
 vnitie and agreement of the sayde
 thre estates, and therefore it is
 sayde that Kinges be chiefe Lords
 and masters in outwarde appa-
 rence, but in effecte they are as it
 wer subiect to their own subiects,
 in that they can not accomplishe
 their owne desires, and that theye
 own mocions and reasons for the
 most parte be neuer accepted, not-
 withstanding diuers tymes they
 tendre to the augmenting of theyr
 liuing, and sometimes to the ayde
 of the necessitie of their affayres,
 and therefore the sener to dispatch
 himselfe of the sayde Princes and
 great Lordes, with the rest of the
 nobilitie, to the end by that means

the

the straightlier to subduce the rest,
 and so to dispose & alter all things
 after his owne pleasure and will,
 it were necessary to vse the trou-
 bles for religion, for that they bee
 the best instruments that might be
 wished to murder and slay on all
 partes, and yet not to reiect suche
 meanes as the peace might mini-
 ster, and which might be executed
 as well by the parties græued, as
 by such as be ingaged and bound
 to his maiesties seruice, as the af-
 faires may best minister occasion,
 also that hereof, they shall fynde
 choyse of deuises and inuentions
 inough among the ashes of debate
 and hatred, which the sayde trou-
 bles and deuisions haue brought
 forth. In the meane tyme to la-
 bour by all meanes possible for the
 deminishing of the sayde Princes,
 Lordes, and nobilitie, as well in

persons, as in goodes, and not to graunt them any thing wherby to obteyne greater numbers of seruants and bondslaves to them at his maiesties charges, it is necessary that his maiestie absteyne from giuing any rewarde and recompences at the suites of the sayd Lordes, or of any other then of such as shall be founde trustie, and whom his maiestie myndeth to preferre vnto their dignities. Also yf it were possible, it were good that such as receiue any liberalitie should come to hys owne presence, to the ende they might perceiue vnto whom they were principally bound, and this ought especially to be obserued among those vnto whom his maiestie shall commit any publick offices, who also after theyr dispatches should be brought to take their leaues of

his

his maieste, toheraby he might let
 them know, him selfe to haue bene
 the only motioner of this honour
 and commodity, also that he might
 commaund them whatsoeuer hys
 maiesty should thinck good, for this
 dealing would greatly binde them
 vnto him and be very profitable.
 Moreover that the decayed and
 ruinous castles and charges should
 be giue to p^r said Princes, Lords,
 and noble men which should re-
 mayne, vntill the tyme were come
 that they might bee dispatched.
 Also that in the meane tyme none
 of their estates, pentiones, or wa-
 ges, should be geuen to any other
 of them, then to such as his maie-
 stie should see good, and that so by
 all meanes possible, their commo-
 dities might be taken away, or at
 the leastwise hindered, for that by
 those meanes he might be the bet-

ter assured of them, & keepe them
from practising any great enter-
prises, but all must bee wrought
artificially and vnder fayre pre-
tēces. Also that his maiesty should
not permit any assembly of estates
to be holden eyther generally or
perticulerly for that they serue on-
ly to brydle Kinges more & more,
but rather he ought seuerely to pu-
nishe all procurers of the same,
whereby the Kinges shall neuer
be without occasion to dispatche
such as should be odious vnto the
and thus after that his maiesty be
dispatched of all hys Princes,
Lords and nobilitie as is afore-
sayd, he may safely attayne vnto
the rest, vnto as all the chiefe forces
and principall parte of the sayde
estates shal be voyde, and that his
maiesty hath with the tyme, made
and created others to hys obedi-

mynde

mynde, for the common people of
 themselves dare not practise any
 thyng, vnlesse they haue some
 great Captaines which wil either
 beare them out in their doynges,
 or egge them forwarde to theyr
 practises. Lykewise his maiestie
 hauing made a peace, should in a-
 ny wyse punish, and for the smalest
 occasion that might be, put to death
 all such gouernours and officers
 of towne, as during these trou-
 bles, haue bene contrary to hys
 seruice, for bicause at the first blast
 of any contrary wynd, they will
 not faile but reuolt, to the ende to
 exempt theselues from such payne
 and punishment as they should
 feare to haue iustly deserved for
 their former follies and offences.
 Also at such tyme as hys maiestie
 hath reduced his subiectes to thys
 obediēce, the people dare not with-

D.i.

stand

no

stand the beating down of fortreffes, & unmaïteling of walled tow-
nes in the hart of his kingdom, or
in any other place where his ma-
iestie shall thinke them hurtfull:
For assuredly the great nūber of
Castles and walled towneſ, doe
eſpecially encourage ſeditious and
euil diſpoſed perſons, to the prac-
tiſes of ſuch enterpriſes, and doe
make the inhabitauntes of the
ſame moze haughty and leſſe obe-
dient: And doubtleſſe the greate
number of towneſ in France were
in tymes paſte, built by ſundrye
Lordes, Princes, and common
wealthes, which enioyed ſeueral
dominions, and then ſerued for
bulwarckes & defences to the one
agaynſt the others, neyther were
they gotten and incorporate vnto
the crowne as preſently they be,
inſomuch that that, belonging now
to

to one only, which was wonte to
 serue diuers, we must needes con-
 fesse that, in that the pluralities
 and diuersities of the grauntes of
 the sayd townes doth cease, conse-
 quently suche of them as are situ-
 ate in the harte of the realme,
 and farre from the borders, are
 not only to no vse, and vnprofita-
 ble, as touching the defence and
 conseruation of the kingdome, but
 cōtrariwise, stand in election to bee
 occasions of diuers euil demeas-
 nures and dealinges.

As concerning religion, at what
 time his maiesty hath attained y^e cō-
 moditie & profite aforesayde, then
 may he easely force all men to re-
 ceive eyther his owne, or any other
 that his maiestie shall thinke good
 of, and so not to permit, but one
 only throughout all hys domini-
 ons and countreys, which will bee

farre moze assured and strengthened, in case his maiesty would forbid all disputations of his sayd religion. Hearevpon the time drawing on to go to masse, the assembly brake vp, and the sayd Poncet was entreated to set downe these meanes which he had discovered and discoursed vpon, with such additions as him self should think good, and that not without great promises and hope of wonderfull commenditie and reboard.

The translatours opinion.



Considering & with my selfe conferring this braue discourse, with such things as I knowe haue passed

sed in France within these few
 peares, & yet dayly doo continue,
 I finde the same to be diligently
 kept, and in all poyntes obserued,
 without omitting any parcel ther-
 of, as playnly and openly I could
 declare and represent to all mens
 viewe, were it not that I feare
 through my discontinueing of a
 courtiers life in France, I should
 forget and ouerslippe some of the
 principall and most necessary oc-
 currences, which especially might
 procure a more assured iudgemēt,
 which suche men may better vn-
 derstand and know, as more ordi-
 narely be resident at the court, ey-
 ther in Paris, or in any other parte
 of France, then I: among whom it
 cannot bee, but that there is some
 one, who wil in part discharge his
 duetie vnto his countrey, parents
 and frendes, and to the rest of hye

posteritie, if he doeth consider the
 weightinesse and daungerous con-
 sequence of the sayde discourse, the
 which whensoever there bee any
 talke of peace, all such as are
 deputed to the same, should
 continually remember
 and wisely consi-
 der.

Fare ye well.



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